

ATELIER DU NOIR

presents

Oneshot:
Years

Author:
Nisei

years

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inspired by [Charlotte](#)

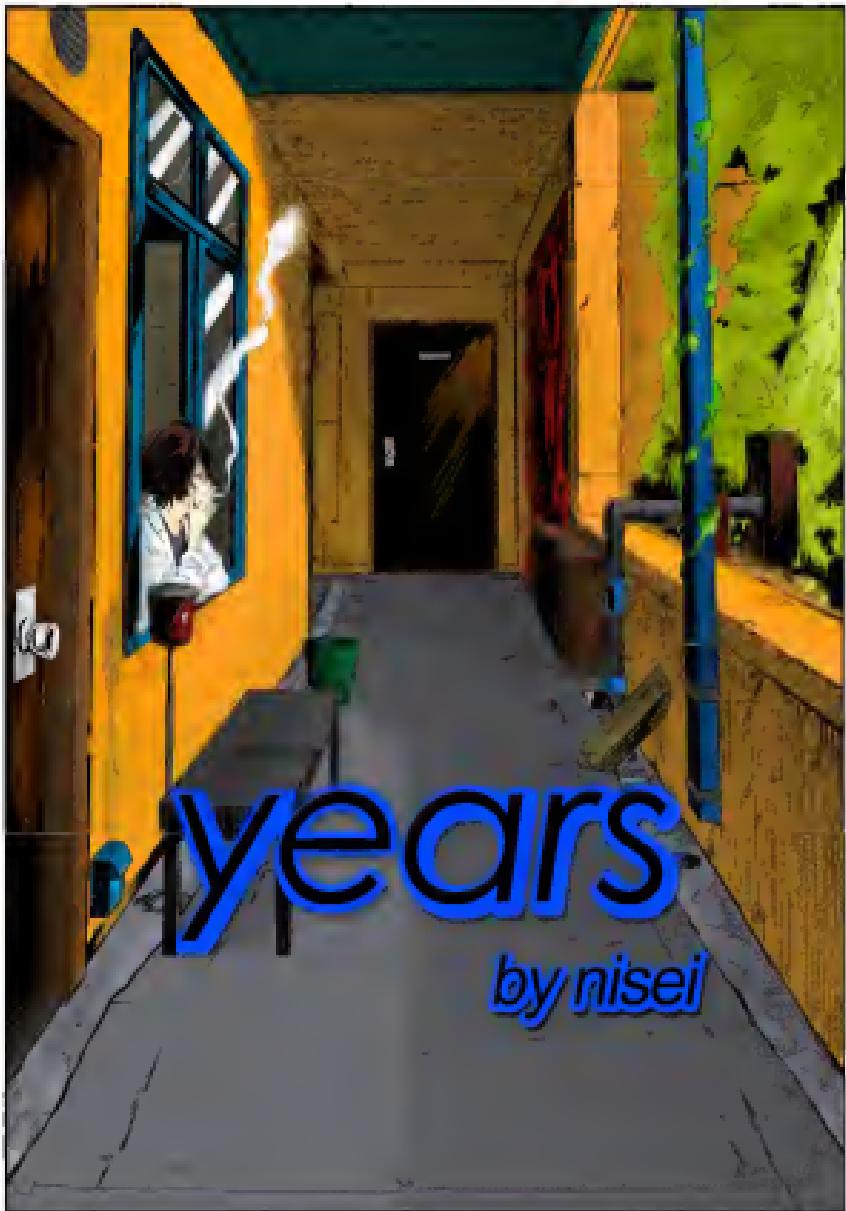
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Special thanks to [dance.](#)

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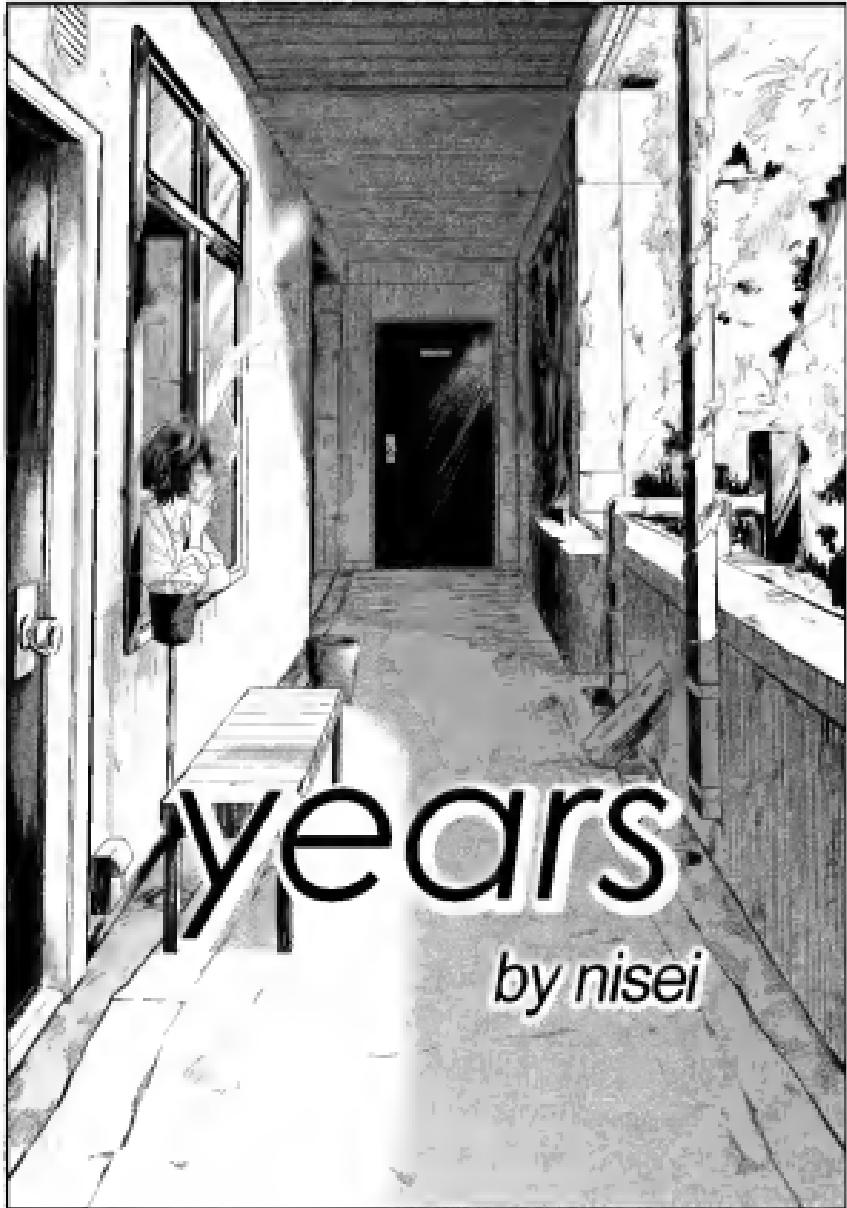
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SEPTEMBER 2016 HONORABLE MENTION WINNER



A story about taking back something important.

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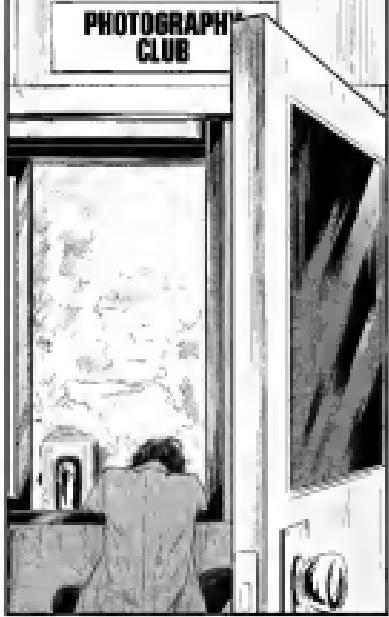
PHOTOGRAPHY
CLUB

AYUMI...



MY BODY
IS OUTSIDE
THE ROOM,
THOUGH?
SERIOUSLY?

I TOLD
YOU THAT
YOU'RE NOT
ALLOWED
TO SMOKE
IN THE
CLASS ROOM.



I'M GLAD
YOU'RE SO
ENTHUSIASTIC.
IF BY SOME
LITTLE CHANCE,
WE CAN INCREASE
MEMBERSHIP
IN THE CLUB,
THEN I'LL BE
HAPPY.

AS THE
ADVISOR, IS IT
OKAY TO SAY
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT?

I'VE GOT
SOME NEGATIVES
THAT I'D LIKE
TO TRY MAKING
PRINTS OF.

YOU'RE NOT A
BOARDING STUDENT,
SO YOU'RE FREE TO
DO AS YOU WANT
AFTER CLASSES END
SO LONG AS YOU
ATTEND SCHOOL.
AND YET...







In the winter of my first year of middle school, we visited my mother's hometown in Hokkaido.

My grandmother's home is almost an hour from the city by train.



That's why when I looked out from the train and saw a silvery white world in front of me, it was essentially the first time I'd ever seen it.

I was very young, so I don't really remember much from when I lived there before.



I'm told I was born in this town and moved with my mother to Tokyo when I was three.

That day was the 12th anniversary of my grandfather's death.

THANKS
FOR THE
HELP, NANA-
CHAN.

I'VE
ALREADY
LAID OUT
FUTONS FOR
THE TWO OF
YOU UP-
STAIRS.

I'LL
TAKE
CARE
OF THE
REST.

MOM?

HMM?
TAKE IT
SLOWLY
TODAY AND
REST.

YOU MUST
BE TIRED
AFTER YOUR
LONG JOURNEY
FROM TOKYO.
RIGHT?

YOU KNOW WHAT HANA TOLD ME?
"YOUR SON SEEMS INCAPABLE OF GREETING PEOPLE PROPERLY."

I'M SO TIRED.

SHE'S PROBABLY JEALOUS OF HER BRILLIANT OLDER SISTER WHO BOTH WORKS HARD AND RAISES A CHILD.

ONE AT LEAST HE DISPLAYED PROPER MANNERS. YOU KNOW HOW HANA-CHAN IS WITH HER COMPETITIVENESS.

IS IT YOUR JOB? YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A HARD WORKER AFTER ALL.

BRILLIANT?
HOW SO?

NO! IT'S ABOUT AMU. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT IT BEFORE.

I'M A FAILURE.

I'M SO EMBARRASSED I COULD DIE.

NANA-CHAN.

NOT ONLY AM I A SINGLE MOTHER, MY CHILD ISN'T EVEN ATTENDING SCHOOL. HE CAN'T EVEN SPEAK TO HIS MOTHER PROPERLY, MUCH LESS OTHER PEOPLE.

AFTER HE WAS BORN, MY LIFE TURNED INTO A MESS.

EVERYONE ELSE HAS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER, WHILE I'M JUST A STRUGGLING HOUSEWIFE.



ARE YOU
COMPARING
YOURSELF
TO?

SEE?!
YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND
MY FEELINGS
EVEN A
LITTLE!

NANA-CHAN,
WHY DON'T YOU
QUIT YOUR JOB
AND THE THREE OF
US CAN LIVE HERE
TOGETHER?

THAT
MAY BE
TRUE...

NEVER
TAKING AN
INTEREST
IN OTHER
PEOPLE!

YOU
DON'T
GET IT;
YOU'VE
ALWAYS
BEEN
THAT
WAY!

THERE'S
NO WAY I
CAN LEAVE
TOKYO!

YOU'VE
NEVER
BEEN OUT
OF THIS
TOWN, SO
YOU DON'T
UNDER-
STAND!

IT'S FINE
FOR YOU,
LIVING A
CAREFREE
LIFE IN THE
COUNTRY.



I knew right away that she had left me there and gone back to Tokyo.



When I woke up in the morning, my mom was gone.



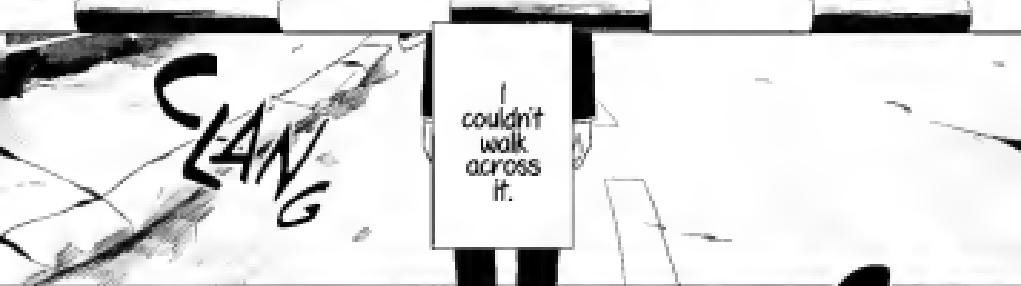
Oddly enough, I didn't cry.



It was decided that I would start going to this middle school beginning in the spring.

From that day on, I've been living with my grandmother.

I don't know what kind of argument went on between my Mom and grandmother.



A horrid memory made me feel nauseated.



Her hands were still covered in mud from working in the fields.



I'm not sure if the school contacted my grandmother or not, but she came to get me.

AYUMU-CHAN!



SLOWLY,
SLOWLY DOES IT.





When autumn came, I slowly began helping out grandma in the fields.

Apart from fixed test times, I didn't go to school.



IS
THAT
RIGHT?

It's
getting
cold!

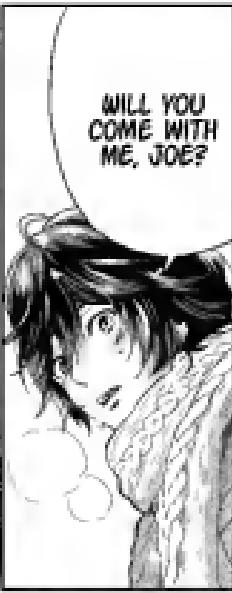
It was only natural that my mom didn't return then, either.

The days passed and on the 10th anniversary of my grandfather's death...









I
CROSSED
IT!

That day was a turning point. Every day after that, I went out with my comrade.

I resolved to develop it myself someday.



To commemorate the first roll of film that I finished, I wrote a '1' on it.

After the snow had melted, I took my passport and went on my first journey.

COME
BACK
SOON.

HERE
YOU GO.



Every time I took a picture, I wanted to see even more of the outside world.

I PUT THE MONEY YOU'VE EARNED FROM HELPING ME INTO A SAVINGS ACCOUNT.



It turned out he was taking a short break from studying at a fashion school in Tokyo.

BUT AT THAT POINT, I COULDN'T SPEAK A WORD OF ENGLISH!

My room-mate was a guy three years older than me, Subaru Izumi.

The dormitory had two-person rooms.

WHEN I WAS 16, I BACKPACKED FROM CANADA TO MEXICO BY MYSELF.

IT'S SUPER STYLISH THERE! DON'T YOU WANT TO TRY AND MEET SOME EXOTIC PEOPLE?

FIRST, IT IS PAPUA NEW GUINEA!

WELL THEN, HOW ABOUT TRAVELLING WITH ME FOR A BIT?

PAL?

Popo?

The first stop on my trip was a month at an English school in the Philippines.

I WAS PRETTY CLOSE TO DMING SO I DECIDED TO STUDY BEFORE I GO THIS TIME!

HA HA HA!
Now!

OH RIGHT, YOU HAVEN'T DECIDED WHICH COUNTRY YOU'RE GOING TO NEXT.





ARE YOU
SURE?

I met
a couple
in a cafe
who owned
a vineyard
near Paris.



When my
traveling
bank
balance made
it difficult
to decide
whether to
see London
or not...

OF COURSE!



After
traveling
to Italy,
I went
around
Eastern
Europe.



LET'S HAVE
LUNCH!

I BROUGHT FRESH
GRAPE JUICE!

Instead of
traditional
architecture
and cityscapes
with huge
buildings...



I prefer
these
sorts of
places.

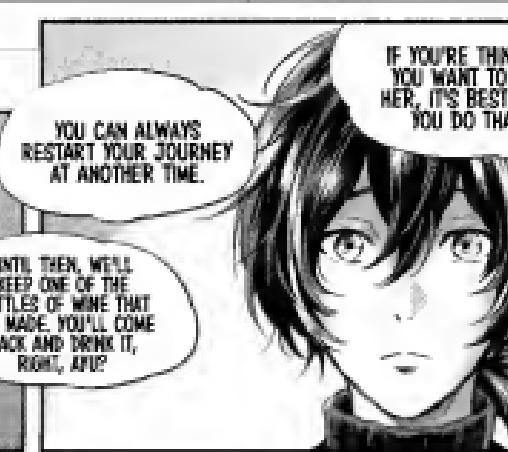
AYU!



After
that,
my solo
journey
started in
Greece.



Before I noticed, it was already December.



IF YOU'RE THINKING YOU WANT TO SEE HER, IT'S BEST THAT YOU DO THAT.

YOU SEEM TO BE HESITATING ABOUT WHETHER TO CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY, AYU.

DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE YOUR GRANDMA?



Since coming here, the only thing I've thought about is my grandmother.







IN USE

If I had to say why, it's because I noticed a person that I recognized in one of the negative frames.

I decided to make prints from my precious first negatives.

Before I go to Tokyo, there's something I want to do first.

I'm now in my second summer of high school.



THIS IS GRANDMA'S GARDEN...

That first picture that my grandpa took...

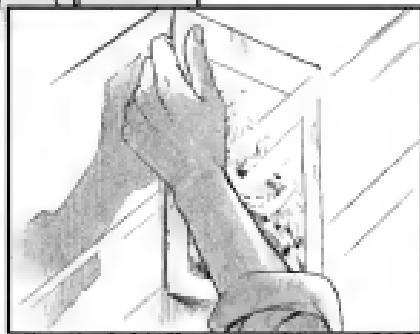
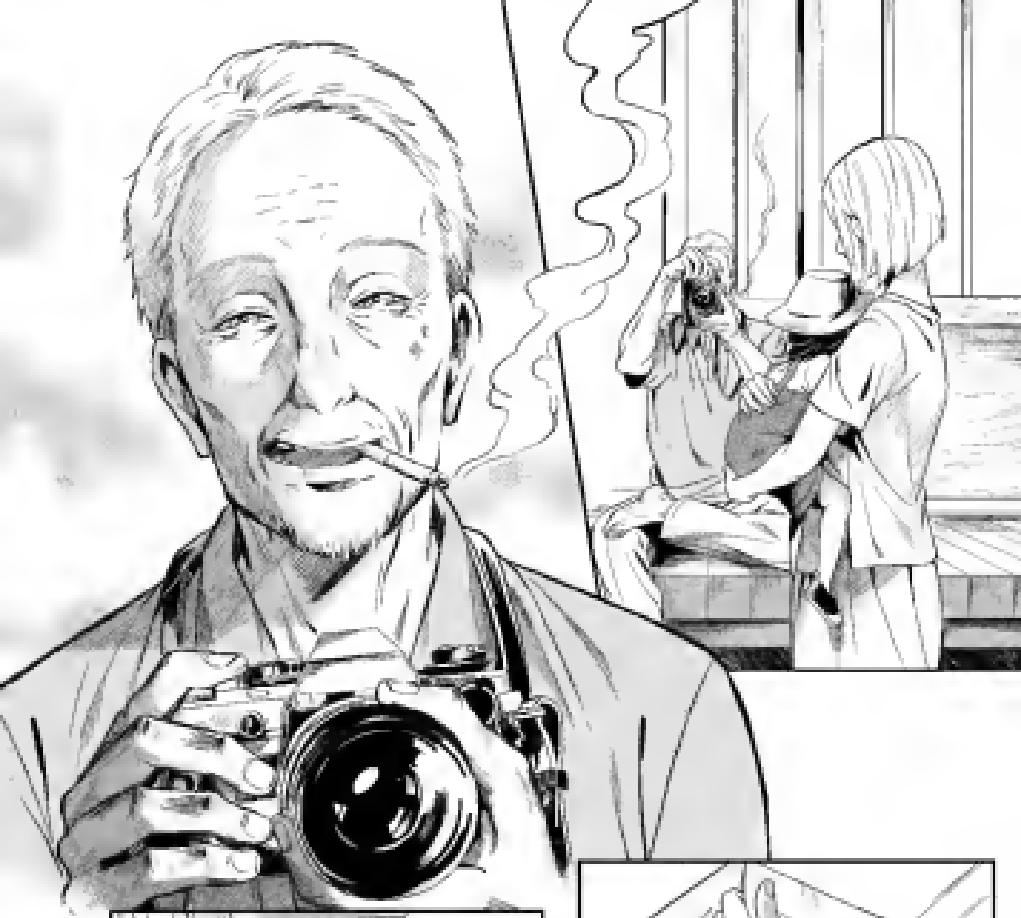


26





At
that
time,
surely
I was
loved.



I'VE...
GROWN
UP.

Just to tell her that.

This
summer, I
am heading
to Tokyo...



years-END
We hope you look forward to Akira's next work.

This time, he leaves full of confidence.

AUTHOR's Notes and Selected Commentaries

I'm so happy to receive this prize on this occasion and hear all the kind words from the judges. Thank you very much. I'd like to concentrate on human drama stories when I create manga from now on.

-NISEI, MANGAKA

The protagonist's emotions are carefully explored and it leaves the reader with warm feelings. The characters also had wonderful facial expressions and were very impressive to see. In particular, the emotions shown at the beginning and end were carefully crafted and these parts were wonderful to read. However, I didn't understand how, in the middle, the protagonist with his hikikomori-like tendencies became absorbed in photography and suddenly decided to study in the Philippines. This was a bit disappointing. I would have liked to see the story dig deeper into the appeal of photography.

-KATOU, EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

It's a work that has the protagonist becoming more positive and proactive and it feels very lively. However, in terms of composition, the past and present are a bit jumbled, the location changes frequently, and unfortunately, it becomes a bit difficult to follow. For your next work, I would like to see you decide "this is the scene I most want to create" and then refine the best way to show that scene to the reader.

-UEDA, EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

